Crawforth depicts scale-numismatic ties

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New excitement has been added to weighing and numismatic history by Michael A. Crawforth with *English Folding Gold Balances of the 18th and 19th Centuries*, published in London this year. The book retails for $33.

In his new study of the English gold coin scales which rise into operation as the box lid is opened, Crawforth describes the charm of these 18th and 19th century examples of practical gadgetry with his fascinating scientific study of their many varieties. With this book a reader may more fully realize the extensive and effective use for almost one century, of the pocket tester for the detection of counterfeits and the measurement of short weight English gold coins then in common circulation.

The author, a professional industrial designer, studied many folding balances and other scales in museums and private collections. He is currently editor of *Equilibrium*, the magazine of the International Society of Antique Scale Collectors and his book successfully combines all phases of the author's experience and scholarship.

One is almost pleased that enough counterfeit, clipped, sweated or heavily worn gold coin circulated in England to create the need for merchants and traders to buy and carry in their pockets these appealing and delicate instruments. The excellence of profuse drawings prepared by the author, particularly those in perspective, enable the reader to appreciate the intricacy and style features of these weighing devices.

The comparative detail of the individual parts show the care with which the research has been conducted to help determine the dates of manufacture, the nature of use, the makers, the improved accuracy and other features of the scales. With photographs of the labels on the scales themselves, the advertisement of them, and references to their history and prior documentation, the author has advanced the subject far beyond the listing of some examples by Sheppard and Musham published 57 years ago.

By reviewing the evidence, the invention of the self-erecting pocket coin scale is logically attributed by the author to Anthony Wilkinson of Kirkby, England, between 1774 and 1782, following the introduction of the New Standard for current weight of the guinea. When the coinage of sovereigns commenced in 1817 and guineas were no longer minted, it is particularly enlightening how the author outlines the unusual scale adaptations devised for use during the transition period when both guineas and sovereigns were in circulation along with their halves.

The book also describes the development of special supplemental facilities for specific gravity testing of coins in some of the scales, and the introduction of gauging to determine proper thickness for genuine coins. The success of Wilkinson's folding scales caused others to go into business and the changes in style, from the uprights to the beams, the turns, the boxes etc., are carefully delineated and described, showing the extensive sales efforts the makers undertook in improving and popularizing their product.

The tabular coordination of the history of the folding scale and its detailed construction, the lives of their makers, and the light it throws on other scales of the period makes the book continually useful.

It is hoped that a broad reception of this publication will encourage the author to additional studies on scales. The book is obtainable from Cape Horn Trading Coy. Ltd. 12 New Row, Covent Garden, London WC2N 4LF, and from numismatic or book dealers.